

Immediate Services Program Crisis Counseling Assistance and Training Program

Initial Assessment of Need

Why should County Mental Health mobilize?

Your County received a Presidential Disaster Declaration due to the recent disaster event. Section 416 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Public Law 100-707) authorizes the President to provide training and services to alleviate mental health problems caused or exacerbated by major disaster. The Act reads as follows:

- ***Crisis Counseling Assistance and Training.*** The President is authorized to provide professional counseling services, including financial assistance to State or local agencies or private mental health organizations to provide such services or training of disaster workers, to victims of major disasters in order to relieve mental health problems caused or aggravated by such major disaster or its aftermath.

What mental health issues may surface?

Many symptoms of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder surface for survivors of a disaster. Problems such as sleep disturbances, depression, irritability, grief and family discord may continue for some time after the disaster. The Immediate Services Program was developed in response to the recognition that disasters result in a variety of emotional and mental health disturbances, which, if untreated, may become long term and debilitating. Programs developed under Section 416 are designed to provide timely relief and to prevent long-term problems from developing.

What funding is available through the Immediate Services Program (ISP) Crisis Counseling and Training?

Assistance under the Stafford Act is limited to Presidentially declared major disasters. The program is designed to supplement the available resources and services of the State and local governments. The support for crisis counseling services to disaster victims may be granted if existing programs and resources cannot provide these services. Funds may be needed to mobilize crisis counseling teams, evaluate the range and duration of crisis counseling services to be provided, train staff, staff FEMA Disaster Assistance Centers, etc.

How does the County apply for ISP for Crisis Counseling funds?

The County begins by determining what the disaster mental health needs are through an **Initial Assessment of Need**. This needs assessment must be initiated within **10 days** of the date of the Presidential declaration. If the county determines that available county resources cannot meet the need for disaster mental health services, an application for ISP Crisis Counseling funds may be submitted.

Conducting an Initial Assessment of Need

Assess the Need

Acquire the most up-to-date and accurate information about the disaster. Take a proactive approach to identifying and assessing needs of disaster victims by, if possible, touring the disaster area. Go to places where victims are gathering; walk around and meet people in their environment; speak with emergency responders to gather information. This information will help identify:

- Who are the victims and vulnerable populations within the disaster-affected general population;
- What geographic locations are most impacted (neighborhoods, business areas, etc.)
- How to deploy crisis response resources;
- How many crisis response personnel are needed (considering out-of-county support provided by neighboring mental health departments and other crisis response resources);
- When and where to deploy resources in order of priority for services;
- What will be the ongoing, lasting need for resources;
- What services will be needed on a long-term basis.

Gather Information

Determine the facts, the data and figures on the types of loss sustained by disaster victims. Read official situation reports (issued by state and local OES personnel) and media accounts. Speak with key informants who are assessing damage and loss and conducting response and recovery operations.

Interpret and Analyze

Note the changes in the equilibrium of the community and those affected; determine the psychological impact to those affected; consider how to support and promote a return to normal life and the time frame this may take in the short and long term. Consider what activities will promote healing in the community.

Identify Disaster Victims

This includes primary, secondary and tertiary client groups.

- **Primary client group:** people who experienced the traumatic event directly.
- **Secondary client group:** families or friends close to an immediate victim and who are affected by the traumatic event.
- **Tertiary client group:** people at the operation level responding to the disaster such as first responders, medical personnel, volunteers providing assistance, professionals providing psychological support and the public.

When assessing these groups, consider the vulnerability and special needs of particular segments of the population such as children, the elderly, the homeless, people with special physical and psychosocial needs, and language and cultural needs.

Identify Degree of Loss and Trauma

Events such as the loss of a family member, a home, personal belongings and school closure can all lead to long term grief and change. The severity of loss and disruption to victims' lives and the length of time needed to recover should be considered.

Identify and Target Services

Prioritize disaster victims' needs and target the best services to meet the needs. Consider how to best reach victims through crisis counseling, outreach services, group crisis counseling, screening, education and information, referral services, stress management. Consider short term and long term interventions.


Assess Capability to Deliver Services

Determine what is within the scope of the county based on county resources and the need for short and long term interventions. Determine if funding is needed to supplement the delivery of comprehensive services.

Submit the Initial Assessment of Need

The Initial Assessment of Need must be initiated within **10 days** of the date of the Presidential declaration. Email or fax a completed copy of the Initial Assessment of Need to Kathy Clark, Disaster Assistance Coordinator at (916) 653-7559 to confirm that the county will or will not request ISP funds.

If the county determines it will not request ISP funds, only fax the front page of the Initial Assessment of Need (page 4. of this document). If funds will be requested, complete and return the entire Initial Assessment of Need, pages 4. – 6.

Areas marked with a gray box () are meant to be filled in with respective information for the name assigned to the disaster, the FEMA disaster number and/or the name of the county, numbers, etc. Simply click on the box and once it is highlighted, fill in the information.

**Disaster
FEMA DR-CA
Initial Assessment of Need**

County:	
Completed by:	
Telephone:	
Cell/pager:	
E-mail:	
Date:	

Identify the lead county staff person responsible for coordinating the County mental health response to the disaster if different than above:

Name:	
Telephone:	
Cell/pager:	
E-mail:	

Are the disaster precipitated mental health needs anticipated to be beyond the capacity of the county's resources?

<input type="checkbox"/> NO	There do not appear to be unmet disaster-precipitated mental health needs at this time.
<input type="checkbox"/> POSSIBLY	Disaster-precipitated mental health needs have been identified and may be at such a magnitude that effective response is beyond the capacity of county resources.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	Disaster-precipitated mental health needs have been identified and are at such a severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capacity of the county.

Is the county considering applying for ISP funding?

<input type="checkbox"/> NO	If YES: Identify a dedicated telephone number for disaster victims' referral: Identify a 24 hour crisis intervention number: Continue completion of this document on the following pages.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	

Services provided to date:

- Briefly describe all mental health services provided to date, number of personnel mobilized to provide the services, including coordination/collaboration with other organizations (a bullet list is adequate).
- Projected number of individuals served to date:
- Estimated cost of services to date (if available):

Physical, psychological and social problems identified to date:

- Describe the disaster mental health problems encountered by victims and disaster workers based on the physical, psychological and social problems experienced as a result of the disaster (a bullet list is adequate).

Projected future needs:

- Describe what ongoing services will be required to meet victims' and disaster workers' mental health needs: crisis counseling, outreach services, group crisis counseling, screening, education and information, referral services, stress management.
- Identify special populations to be targeted, including known high-risk groups such as children, elderly, ethnic and cultural populations, etc.
- Projected number of individuals who may be served by ongoing services:

Note: the county is not locked into a response by providing this estimated information. If the assessment changes significantly, notify Kathy Clark at (916) 654-3598.